

PROCEEDINGS OF THE HISTORIC CONSERVATION BOARD

MONDAY, May 20, 2002

3:00 P.M., J. MARTIN GRIESEL ROOM, CENTENNIAL PLAZA II

The Historic Conservation Board met at 3:00 P.M., in the J. Martin Griesel Room, Centennial Plaza II, with members, Borys, Clement, Kreider, Raser, Senhauser, Spraul-Schmidt, and Wallace present. Absent: Bloomfield, Sullebarger.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS AND ZONING VARIANCE, 556 LIBERTY HILL STREET, PROSPECT HILL HISTORIC DISTRICT

Staff member Caroline Kellam presented the staff report on this request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the renovation of the building located at 556 Liberty Hill, including the construction of a one-story garage addition, a side porch and a roof-top clerestory. The project involves converting a four-family dwelling to a two-family, with the owner occupying one unit.

Project architect Don Beck, and abutting property owner Rick Sowash, along with his architect Tom Arnold, attended the pre-hearing. The project was presented to the Prospect Hill Neighborhood Association, which responded by email on the date of this meeting, 5/20/02. The Association expressed a preference of a columned front porch instead of the bracketed canopy proposed. They also suggested the garage be set back to align with the new addition proposed for 558 Liberty Hill. Ms. Kellam said there was no response from the Mt. Auburn Community Council.

Ms. Kellam stated that the proposed one story two-car garage addition would be built at the rear of the property along Corporation Alley. The garage will be brick veneer and have two garage door entrances.

Ms. Kellam explained that for zoning purposes, the property consists of two front yards and is categorized as a sub-minimum lot. Approval for a conditional accessory use would be required from the Board since the construction of the garage addition does not meet minimum setback requirements for the front yard, side yard and side yard sums.

Project architect Don Beck was present to answer questions from the Board. In response to Ms. Sullebarger, Mr. Beck acknowledged that it would probably be more in keeping with the district if the main entryway were recessed from the facade, but the proximity of the interior staircase does not allow for it. He also explained in response to Mr. Raser that there were recent changes to the site plan to reduce the height of the porch floor in order to eliminate the porch railing. Mr. Beck suggested that the proposed canopy would be less intrusive than a porch supported by columns.

Mr. Beck also indicated that changes had recently been made to eliminate the pyramidal skylight, which still shows on two of the drawings in the staff report. The plan now proposes a clerestory with a solid roof and windows on three sides. The clerestory will be about 18" higher than the previously proposed skylight.

Mr. Senhauser pointed out that because of the steep slopes in Prospect Hill, the roof is really a fifth façade. He said a proliferation of belvederes, which allow roof access, would not be desirable and that approval in this instance would not apply to all. Mr. Beck stated that the clerestory is only visible from Milton Street, that the windows would be fixed and would not provide access to the roof. He added that the clerestory is positioned over an opening below.

BOARD ACTION

The Board voted (motion by Raser, second by Bloomfield, Sullebarger abstaining) to:

1. Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the rehabilitation of 556 Liberty Hill including the construction of a one-story garage addition along the north rear elevation, a porch on the east side elevation and a roof-top clerestory with the final plans and any revisions to be reviewed by the Urban Conservator prior to issuing a Certificate of Appropriateness and a building permit.
2. Approve a conditional accessory use to allow the construction of the two-story garage addition at 556 Liberty Hill with the following dimensions:
 - a. 2'6" from the property line (a variance from 22' required),
 - b. on the west property line (a variance from the 5' required), and
 - c. with a side yard sum of 4' (a variance from the 12' required),

as per Section 1419-400 (F) Minimum Setbacks (1), (2) and (3) finding that such relief from the literal implication of the Zoning Code:

- a. is necessary and appropriate in the interest of historic conservation so as not to adversely affect the historic architectural or aesthetic integrity for the district; and
- b. will not be materially detrimental to the public health, safety, and welfare or injurious to the property in the district or vicinity where the property is located.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS AND ZONING VARIANCE, 558 LIBERTY HILL STREET, PROSPECT HILL HISTORIC DISTRICT

Staff member Caroline Kellam presented the staff report for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of a two-story garage/office addition to the building located at 558 Liberty Hill Street.

The two-story addition will consist of a first floor two-car garage with one large steel garage door and a second floor office with 6/6 double hung windows and side entry.

Property Owner Rick Sowash and project architect Tom Arnold attended the pre-hearing. The abutting property owner, Wilford Buames and his architect, Don Beck, were also in attendance. The project was presented to the Prospect Hill Neighborhood Association, which responded via email on 5/20/02. The Association suggested the addition be set back equidistant with the new proposed garage for 556 Liberty Hill. The Association also expressed a preference for two garage doors rather than the single large door. There was no response from the Mt. Auburn Community Council.

Ms. Kellam described the property as being very visible from Liberty Hill, Highland and Corporation Alley. A variance would be required since the construction of the addition does not meet minimum setback requirements for the front yard, side yard and side yard sums.

Staff suggested the use of 1/1 double hung windows to further differentiate the addition from the original building.

Project architect Tom Arnold was in attendance to address questions from the Board.

The Board discussed the use of double garage doors improving compatibility and design, suggesting that the use of a large single door is more suburban in character. Mr. Arnold agreed that it was possible to have two doors, but it would require widening the addition, and that the remaining eight feet to the property line could accommodate guest parking next to the garage. Site improvements including the additional parking and a new screen wall the length of the property at the side street were not included in this application.

BOARD ACTION

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Sullebarger, second by Kreider) to take the following actions:

1. Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of a two-story addition along the north rear elevation of 558 Liberty Hill with the following conditions:
 - a. the windows in the new construction be changed to either simulated/divided or true light sash or 1/1 sash;
 - b. the single garage door be changed to two garage doors; and
 - c. final plans and any revisions to be reviewed by the Urban Conservator prior to issuing a Certificate of Appropriateness and a building permit.
2. Approve a conditional accessory use to allow the construction of the two-story garage addition at 558 Liberty Hill with the following dimensions:
 - a. 2'6" from the property line (a variance from 22' required),
 - b. on the west property line (a variance from the 9' required), and
 - c. with a side yard sum of 7' (a variance from the 20' required,as per Section 1419-400 (F) Minimum Setbacks (1), (2) and (3) finding that such relief from the literal implication of the Zoning Code:
 - a. is necessary and appropriate in the interest of historic conservation so as not to adversely affect the historic architectural or aesthetic integrity for the district; and
 - b. will not be materially detrimental to the public health, safety, and welfare or injurious to the property in the district or vicinity where the property is located.

PRELIMINARY DESIGN REVIEW, 126-134 MULBERRY STREET, OVER-THE-RHINE (NORTH) HISTORIC DISTRICT

Staff member Cheri Rekow presented the staff report for this preliminary design review of new construction of four single-family homes at 126-134 Mulberry Street.

The project would include the demolition of a non-contributing brick garage at 126 Mulberry Street and a stone retaining wall at the front of the site. The proposed homes are detached single-unit homes with elevated front entrances and garage doors are on the front elevation on Mulberry Street.

Ms. Rekow informed the Board that the Applicant/Developer, Joe Gorman, Mulberry Views, LLC received funding in 2001 through Community Development's Housing Round Program for site preparation, which includes the demolition of the garage. The Housing Round funds were approved prior the Over-the-Rhine Historic District being designated. At this time, the Applicant is presenting concept plans; however, the Applicant intends to sell the property to a builder who may change the plans and elevations from those submitted. Ms. Rekow stated that as proposed, the new construction would need a zoning variance for side yard setbacks and property line construction.

Applicant/Developer Joe Gorman and Mr. Franz Stansbury of Diversified Development Services were present to answer questions from the Board.

In response to Mr. Raser who questioned if the Mt. Auburn Community Council was contacted, Mr. Gorman responded that the Community Council was contacted at the time of the original Housing Round application. He stated that they had also spoken with the President of the Community Council the previous week and that they had a meeting last Tuesday. Mr. Forwood indicated that since this was a preliminary hearing, no public notification has yet been filed.

Mr. Senhauser observed that in a development of this sort, the voids between the houses can be as significant as the buildings themselves. He suggested for the sake of rhythm and continuity that the four lots should have equal frontage and the front setbacks shallow enough so as to not allow for parking. Mr. Gorman responded that he had set out to establish a rhythm with the design of the houses, having a 6' space (side yard) and 20' for the house; the last lot ended up having an 8' side yard. Mr. Franz stated the houses had originally been at the front property line, but were setback in response to input from the City's Traffic Engineering Division.

Mr. Bloomfield suggested considering rowhouses, which would leave enough room for a fifth building and be more like neighboring houses. He also questioned the suburban solution of garage doors on the front elevation. Mr. Stansbury stated that they had originally considered six rowhouses, but marketing studies indicated that detached homes are preferred. He also stated that the garage doors are proposed for the front since security is a concern.

Mr. Raser commented that stairs going up to the doors and a garage on the first floor front elevation can create a good urban building; but the proposed design appears squatty. The garage door would not be as noticeable if elevation was developed vertically with a defined base shaft and the top. He also suggested they should feel free to construct right up to the property line. Mr. Stansbury confirmed that in talking with the builder, the design was subject to change.

The Board discussed alternatives to the lot widths, suggesting that how the lots are subdivided could determine the type of house. Four 26.5' lots would set up a rowhouse plan. An alternative suggestion was to make duplexes with one common wall and possibly reducing them in width picking up enough space to have windows

on the side, which may allow for more marketable spacing. In addition, creating four completely different buildings was discouraged.

BOARD ACTION

No official action was required by the Board.

[Beth Sullebarger left the meeting]

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS, 235-237 WEST COURT STREET, COURT STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT

Staff member Adrienne Cowden introduced this By-leave Item stating that she had presented the staff report to the Board on April 22, 2002 for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the conversion of this commercial building located at 235-237 West Court Street into two single-family residences within the Court Street Historic District and the Downtown Development District. The Board asked the applicant to address the following items left unresolved at that meeting: 1) the details/materials for the second floor deck and third story balconies; and 2) the type and style of garage doors on the main Court Street façade.

Ms. Cowden circulated a manufacturer's brochure showing the garage door the applicant has submitted; it is a vertical paneled, overhead door with faux metal straps and hinges. Ms. Cowden suggested the proposed door might not be the most appropriate solution for this historic district, but feels staff can work with the applicant to obtain more compatible options.

Ms. Cowden reminded the Board that the original proposal for the rear elevation showed a wood railing on the second story deck, as well as the third story balconies. The applicant has revised the third floor balconies with railings with woven wire mesh supported by metal brackets. Ms. Cowden described it as simple, obviously modern, and more in keeping with the district.

The proposal for the second story balcony area is extending the brick parapet wall up to a height of four feet on the side and rear elevation. Ms. Cowden stated that the proposed treatment is more compatible with the district than the wood fence that was originally proposed.

Applicant Mary Jill Donovan was present to answer questions from the Board. She indicated that the new design for the balconies had been modeled from a building at 911 Race Street in the 9th Street National Register Historic District. Staff suggested that the garage door on that same building would be acceptable at 235-237 Court Street and less costly than the one presented. She said that she would accept the Board's recommendation regarding the garage door.

Mr. Senhauser speculated that the mesh rail as proposed with three inch grid may be rejected under building code by the City's Building & Inspections Department (since it could be climbed), but that a smaller dimension would also be acceptable.

BOARD ACTION

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Spraul-Schmidt, second by Bloomfield) to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness with the following conditions:

1. The second and third floor deck railings will be of code compliant wire mesh 2 inches or smaller;

2. The parapet wall will be extended to a height of 3' above the finished deck floor;
3. The window and door on the rear property line will be infilled with masonry (as built);
4. Applicant should work with staff to develop a more appropriate solution for the garage door on the main façade; and
5. Final construction documents with all proposed exterior finishes and elements shall be submitted to the Urban Conservator for approval prior to construction.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no other items for consideration by the Board, the meeting adjourned.

William L. Forwood
Urban Conservator

John C. Senhauser
Chairman

Date